

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 AID-05 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 L-03 H-02 PRS-01 MC-02

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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7442

S E C R E T LIBREVILLE 0364

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, MILI, PFOR, GB, AO

SUBJ: US MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO GABON

REF: LIBREVILLE 0339

1. AS ANTICIPATED REFTTEL, PRESIDENT ASKED ME ON RETURN TO LIBREVILLE FEB. 26 FOR USG DECISION ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE. HE MADE NO COMMENT WHEN I REPLIED THAT MATTER WAS STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION WITHIN USG, MERELY RAISING EYEBROW AND MOVING DOWN RECEPTION LINE.

2. MEANWHILE, FRENCH HAVE COME THROUGH WITH ADDITIONAL AID CALCULATED TO BOLSTER BONGO'S SENSE OF SECURITY. GOF EARLIER THIS WEEK DELIVERED TO PRESIDENTIAL GUARD FOUR DOUGLAS AD-4 SYKRAIDERS, FULLY EQUIPPED WITH ROCKETS AND BOMBS. PLANES ARE BEING FLOWNBYP EX-FRENCH AIR FORCE PILOTS ON PERSONAL CONTRACT TO GOG.

3. COMMENT: WHILE USG ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WILL CLEARLY REMAIN SECONDARY TO FRENCH, BONGO CONTINUES TO ATTACH CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO EVIDENCE OF US SUPPORT IT WOULD PROVIDE AND TO DEGREE OF DIVERSIFICATION AWAY FROM SOLE RELIANCE ON FRENCH SOURCES.

4. SINCE THREE MONTHS HAVE NOW ELAPSED SINCE BONGO

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RECEIVED USG AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO BE HELPFUL,

HIS GROWING IMPATIENCE COMES AS NO SURPRISE. WITH
QUESTION CLEARLY ON TOP OF HIS LIST INSOFAR AS RELATIONS
WITH USG CONCERNED, IT WILL BE HARD TO GET ANY OTHER
BUSINESS DONE WITH HIM UNTIL HE HAS RECEIVED OUR
DECISION. WOULD THEREFORE APPRECIATE EARLIEST POSSIBLE
REPLY THAT I CAN COMMUNICATE TO PRESIDENT.STEIGMAN

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NNN

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